Virginia Saltwater Development Fund
Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Research or Data Collection Project

Project Number: 0606-12 **Date: 9/8/2006**

Title: L) Utility of Alternative Reefs to Simultaneously Enhance Recreational Fish Production and Oyster Restoration.

> "The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen."
>
> Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

NOTE: Please read the entire scoresheet before beginning, then provide comments, and circle ( ) the appropriate score for each item. Thank You.

A. <u>Problem Description and Resolution (20 points)</u>

1. Comment on the adequacy of the problem description, background information, knowledge of available literature/data sources, and anticipated benefits.

The project description is clearly stated with adequate background information. References are reasonably up to date. Comparing productivity of various types of structure is appropriate and should serve to add further knowledge as the to various organisms which can be part of the increase in biomass production afforded by artificial reefs. This information <u>may</u> prove to be of benefit to on-going finfish reef development in Virginia by opening new areas for consideration. The overall project should benefit both shellfish interests (primarily oysters and mussels) as well as the finfish community.

2. Describe your views on the conceptual approach to solve the problem.

The conceptual approach appears appropriate to the stated task. Comparing samples of scrapings taken of similar size areas by similar method of each structure

is logical and should facilitate comparisons, upon which to make rankings as to the effectiveness of various structures. Studying and comparing finfish populations should provide similar benefit.

SCORE (Circle one)	Poor				Excellent
	0	5	10	(15)	20

B. <u>Soundness of Project Design/Technical Approach (25 points)</u>

1. Is there sufficient information to technically evaluate the proposal?

Yes.

2. What are the strengths/weaknesses of the project design (thoroughness, practicality, methods, integration with other work, etc.)?

Sampling the sessile organisms by scraping will provide accurate data as to the quantity and make up of the overall fouling community. Assessing finfish populations by video and diver observation is appropriate, although visibility will be a limiting factor in both methods. The proposal does not address time-of-day assessments for the finfish work, which could differ markedly.

The utilization of recreational fishermen may provide less than consistent sampling; however, including and encouraging participation for the marine angling sector is most appropriate. The entire project is excellent in terms of inclusion of participation and input for various public and private sectors.

Also, placement of the structures by March, as opposed to between March and April, might better utilize the spring fouling season.

SCORE (Circle One)	Poor					Excellent
	0	5	10	15	(20)	25

C. <u>Project Management and Experience/Qualifications of Personnel (15 points)</u>

What is your opinion of the experience and capabilities of the Principal Investigator(s) to manage and conduct the work, the availability of facilities, and education and experience of assisting personnel.

Support personnel selection criteria as to background appear to be most appropriate. The principal investigator has a proven track record.

SCORE (Circle one)	Poor			Excellent
	0	5	10	(15)

D. <u>Project costs (15 points)</u>

Is the budget realistic and reasonable? Indicate any unreasonable costs.

The estimate of placement cost appears to be somewhat low, depending upon the donation level of construction support.

Also, in light of the closely aligned Seitz project, there may be duplication of effort that could be minimized by coordination of efforts, such as sampling and the resultant need for vessel support as well as analysis of the samples themselves.

SCORE (circle One)	Poor			Excellent
	0	(5)	10	15

E. Value of the Project to Fisheries Managers (25 points)

Do you believe the results of this project will further management of the species described? Will the results be useful to managers?

This study should provide valuable information for the development of combination reefs in the Lynnhaven system and other environmentally similar areas.

SCORE (circle one)	Poor					Excellent
	0	5	10	15	(20)	25

PLEASE ADD ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS BELOW:

The proposal states that "results will serve as a model for the construction, deployment and utility of combined artificial fish and oyster reefs throughout Chesapeake Bay". This project would undoubtedly provide valuable management information to the development of oyster/fishing reefs in environments similar to

that of the Lynnhaven system, but, whereas none of the work will take place in other parts of Chesapeake Bay, this may be a drastic overstatement.

As stated earlier, this study might serve to open up new areas of consideration for the development of finfish reefs that would also serve to benefit the oyster/mussel communities.

The overall cost appears high in that only four types of structure are evaluated with no work outside the Lynnhaven system. Also, as stated earlier, coordination with the Seitz project appears advisable.

Given the fact that this study should benefit the oyster fishery, participation by that sector would seem appropriate.